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ABSTRACT

Described is a structured approach to managing behavior and increasing socialization skills of severely disturbed children in primary and adolescent classrooms. It is noted that manual signing accompanied by verbalization, gesture, and physical assisting is used to communicate behavioral expectations in the primary class; while in the adolescent classroom, the structure is reinforced through the use of a play money behavior modification program. Explained are such behavior changing techniques as positive reinforcement (verbal praise, food, and physical contact), overcorrection, positive reinforcement paired with punishment, "putting through" (physical assistance in performing desired tasks), and ignoring. (SBH)

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Behavior Management and Socialization Techniques for Severely Emotionally Disturbed Children

Rebecca Newman

Handling behaviors displayed by both special education and regular education students appears to take up a great deal of teacher time on a daily basis. I would like to share with you today some of the techniques used in the SPA Program for both increasing positive and decreasing negative behavior. In addition, I will be presenting techniques that we are using to increase socialization skills in our severely disturbed population.

The structured approach pioneered by Haring and Phillips is the basic technique utilized in both the primary and adolescent classrooms. The idea is to assist even the most disturbed student in understanding the relationship between his/her behavior and the consequence of that behavior. This approach is accomplished through some of the following:

Insert Overhead 1 about here

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1. Establishing a routine schedule which allows the student to predict events within the school environment;
2. Using individualized programming to assure student success;
3. Utilizing the Premack Principle of work first, then play;
4. Stressing consistency in adult expectations and behavior;
5. Using a structured room arrangement with carrols for those who require a physical structure around them; and,
6. Stressing clearly stated expectations.

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One reason this type of structured approach is successful is because no expectation is set that the child or the teacher is unable to carry through on. For example, if a female teacher felt she was unable to enforce a "time-out for hitting" consequence with a 6-foot, 200 lb. adolescent boy, she would not set that expectation initially. If the expectation is set and the behavior occurs, the consequence must be carried through.

In the primary class, where none of the children have totally developed language, the behavioral expectations may be communicated to a greater extent through manual signing accompanied by verbalization, gesture, and physical assisting. There is not one overall behavior modification program in this class, but rather a series of individual programs to meet each student's needs.

In the adolescent classroom, the structure is reinforced through the use of a play money behavior modification program. Students earn money for completing assigned tasks, for acceptable behavior, and for interacting productively with other peers. The amount of money earned varies from activity to activity. If the teacher is trying to increase a particular behavior, such as correctly completing assignments in shorter periods of time, that behavior when observed would be reinforced by larger amounts of money. Money is spent for lunch, sharpening pencils, playing desired games, extra trips to the bathroom, bus tickets to go home after school, and items in the school store which is open for 15 minutes each day. Since positive reinforcement (i.e. earning money) alone has not been successful in totally eliminating unacceptable behaviors or in increasing desired behaviors, a punisher was also instituted in the money system. Students are required to "pay" money for unacceptable behaviors

such as imitating peers, hitting, or touching.

New students in the program are exposed to this type of structure for the first thirty days to assess what influence the structure alone has on their behavior before any specific individualized programs are implemented. Many times this situation alone will increase on task behavior and decrease some of the self-stimulatory or negative behaviors.

Insert Overhead 2 about here

The process of selecting individual behaviors to increase or decrease involves several steps. Initially, 16 minute samples of data are taken on a number of behaviors observed in each child daily by an outside observer. From this sample and daily teacher contact with the student, specific priority behaviors are identified. The aim may be to increase or decrease the frequency, depending on the behavior. Once selected, the specific behavior is operationally defined and daily frequency data is taken on the behavior for a baseline period.

After the baseline period, staff members evaluate the data, establish reasonable exit criteria, devise a technique for dealing with the behavior, and implement the procedure.

At this point I would like to share some of the techniques used in changing behavior by the SPA staff. As I stated earlier, our basic concept revolves around the concept of structure with major emphasis on behavior modification and positive reinforcement. Some of the reinforcers which have been used to varying degrees with students include verbal praise, food, physical contact such as hugs, tactile stimulation such as tickling

or stroking, television, free time, notes home, and trips out of the building.

Even though effective to a certain extent, we have found that positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior has not been enough to decrease undesirable behavior to a zero incidence or to increase desired behaviors to a high level and maintain them there. Therefore, we have also utilized other techniques for changing behaviors.

One of these techniques is overcorrection, which has been developed and reported in the literature by Azrin and Foxx. Overcorrection is a 2-part procedure where the subject 1) corrects his/her misbehavior by restoring the situation to a state vastly improved from what existed before the disruption; and 2) practices overly correct forms of desired behavior. Overcorrection has been selected as one of the best alternatives to other more severe techniques because of the immediate results it produces. An example of this procedure was used on a nine year old boy who ruminated after eating lunch each day. Rumination was defined as vomiting food into the oral cavity or from the oral cavity. Most frequently this behavior consists of vomiting food into the mouth and then reswallowing it.

The overcorrection procedure consisted of the adult saying, "No, swallow it" immediately after the child ruminated. The adult then opened the child's mouth and squirted lemon juice from a plastic squeeze container into the child's mouth and instructed the child to "swallow it." The adult placed his hand over the child's mouth so that he could not spit out the lemon juice. The child was then taken to the sink where his

lips and face were washed with soap and water for a period of 45 seconds. After this, lotion was applied to the child's face for 30 seconds.

Insert Overhead 3 about here

Baseline taken on rumination indicated a mean of 44%. Once the procedure was implemented, the mean for ruminating behavior decreased to 1.3% in the first ten days of implementation as can be seen by this graph. Currently this behavior is at a zero incidence rate.

Another type of procedure which has been very effective has been the use of positive reinforcement paired with punishment. Since positive reinforcement alone was not always enough to handle behaviors, a combination of positive reinforcement and punishment has been utilized.

Insert Overhead 4 about here

An example of this was used on a seven year old boy named Terry who had language but displayed a high frequency of non-task related sounds such as bah, dah, and aspirations at a high volume. This child was engaged in a variety of language activities throughout the day and was positively reinforced with verbal praise and/or food treats each time he verbalized words, regardless of the situation. The punishment procedure, which was instituted each time he verbalized non-task related sounds, consisted of three steps; 1) first, the adult would immediately say, "Terry, no noise" in a bland tone; 2) second, if Terry was not quiet within 1 to 2 seconds, the adult placed her hand over his mouth and held it there

continuously for thirty seconds. At the end of 30 seconds of quiet, the adult removed her hand and said "Good being quiet."

Insert Overhead 5 about here

From the data you can see that the mean for vocalizations inappropriate was 196. During the first intervention procedure, the mean number of vocalizations decreased to 156, which is still a high rate. When the verbal warning was removed and only hand-over-mouth was used, the mean number of vocalizations per day was 13. Even though this type of procedure does not contain all of the steps described in overcorrection, it is often referred to as such by researchers in the literature.

Other paired positive-negative reinforcement procedures which have been used include slapping wrist, head on desk for throwing objects paired with positive practice, and removal of work materials and adult attention for out-of-seat behavior coupled with teacher attention for in-seat behavior.

A third procedure is called "putting through" and deals with physical assistance in performing desired tasks or completing assignments. If a child refuses to work, and demonstrates this refusal through overt aggressive behavior (such as throwing or tearing learning materials, hitting, and/or leaving seat), or through passive behavior (such as daydreaming, closing eyes, spinning, or finger waving), the adult physically puts the child through the task. This is done by physically directing the hands while keeping the child's body in a stationary position. The purpose of this procedure is not only to control the avoidance behavior,

but to also ensure that time will be spent consistently on task. A modification used with this technique is modeling and is utilized when the child is not on task or is engaged in deviant behaviors. If the child does not respond to verbal direction, the adult models the desired behavior (such as washing hands or placing a puzzle piece in the appropriate place) while ignoring the child's deviant behavior. Many times the child will stop the inappropriate behavior and model the adult's appropriate behavior.

Another technique used with a 15 year old boy named Calvin involved the participation of the whole school, including regular classroom students and teachers, the janitor, and the cook. Calvin had a history of running from the classroom and then roaming the halls of the school yelling, tipping over trash cans, and just generally trying to get people's attention. If approached he would run in a "chase me" type game, but since Calvin was a large, strong adolescent, it was not such a fun game for the adult. The technique used was ignoring. Everyone in the building, including classroom students, were instructed in how to ignore Calvin if they saw him roaming around by himself in the halls. In doing so, this removed the reinforcement he was receiving for the inappropriate running (disruptive) behavior.

At this point I would like to share with you one of the socialization programs used with the adolescents. Since the socialization skills of these students are extremely poor, we decided to set up structured situations when verbal communication could be naturally encouraged. Since food is very reinforcing and since they all eat lunch at school, a socialization

program was set up around eating lunch. Baseline was taken during lunch for four days with students eating out of their lunch trays which were pre-packaged and heated by the school cafeteria. After baseline, lunch was changed to family-style eating. Students were instructed in table setting, all food was served family style, and students had to request food from others before it was passed to them. Those who had very poor expressive language were required to sign as well as vocalize what they wanted. After lunch, the students washed and dried the dishes. Data was taken on the number of student responses and initiations, and on the number of adult responses and initiations. Results indicated that responses and initiations from both students and adults increased.

These are a few of the procedures used by our staff in dealing with behavior. At this point Dick Swenson will explain some of the techniques used with the parent program.

STRUCTURED APPROACH

1. ROUTINE SCHEDULE
2. INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMMING
3. PREMACK PRINCIPLE
4. CONSISTENCY
5. PHYSICAL STRUCTURE
6. CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS

1. OBSERVE
2. IDENTIFY TARGET BEHAVIOR
3. DEFINE BEHAVIOR
4. COLLECT FREQUENCY DATA
5. DETERMINE EXIT CRITERIA FOR BEHAVIOR
6. DEVELOP PROCEDURE
7. IMPLEMENT PROCEDURE

~~Corky~~ Landrum	1-19-77	Classroom	Debbie Whorton
Student's Name	Date	Area Involved	Teacher's Name

Behavior: Rumination

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES AND MATERIALS	CONSEQUENCE	CRITERIA
Decelerate rumination behavior in the classroom via the use of an overcorrection procedure	Behavior Definition: This behavior is operationally defined as vomiting food into the oral cavity or from the oral cavity. Most frequently this behavior will consist of vomiting food into the mouth and then re-swallowing it. Materials Needed: (1) Lemon juice or lemon extract housed in a plastic "squeeze" container; (2) soap, water and wash cloth; (3) face lotion Procedure: 1. Immediately after Corky ruminates, the following instructions are given: "No, swallow it" (unless Corky only vomits from the oral cavity, e.g on the floor, at which time he is told simply "No") 2. The child's manager/trainer opens his mouth and squirts lemon juice into the oral cavity (one squeeze) and tells him to "swallow it". The manager/trainer will place his hand over the subjects' mouth so that he can not spit out the lemon juice. 3. Corky is then led to the sink area in the classroom, where is mouth, lips and face are washed with soap and water for a period of 45 seconds	Pass: Corky swallows his vomit within 5 seconds Fail: If Corky does not swallow his vomit on command within 5 seconds, the manager/trainer forces Corky to swallow it Pass: Corky swallows the lemon juice within 5 sec. Fail: If Corky does not swallow the lemon juice within 5 seconds, the manager/trainer forces Corky to swallow it. In the event that Corky is able to spit the lemon juice out, procedure number 2 is repeated. Pass: Corky allows the washing process to take place.	5% or less daily rumination for a two week period

SPA PROJECT

CHART # 1 for: Corky

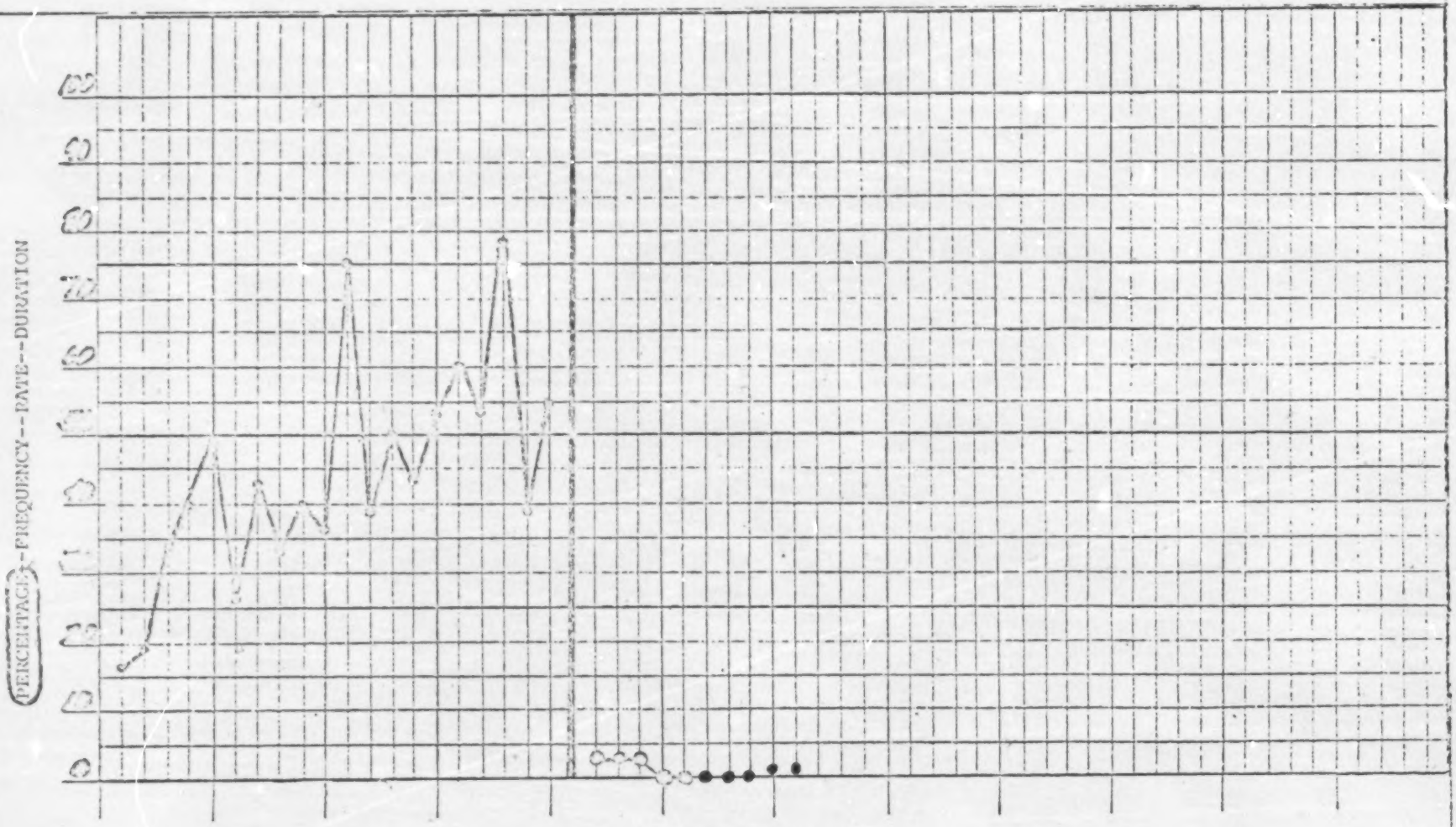
LOCATION: Primary Classroom

MANAGERS: G. Sasso

DATE: 12-7-76

AIM	
A	
M	
D	X

BEHAVIOR & DEFINITION: Rumination



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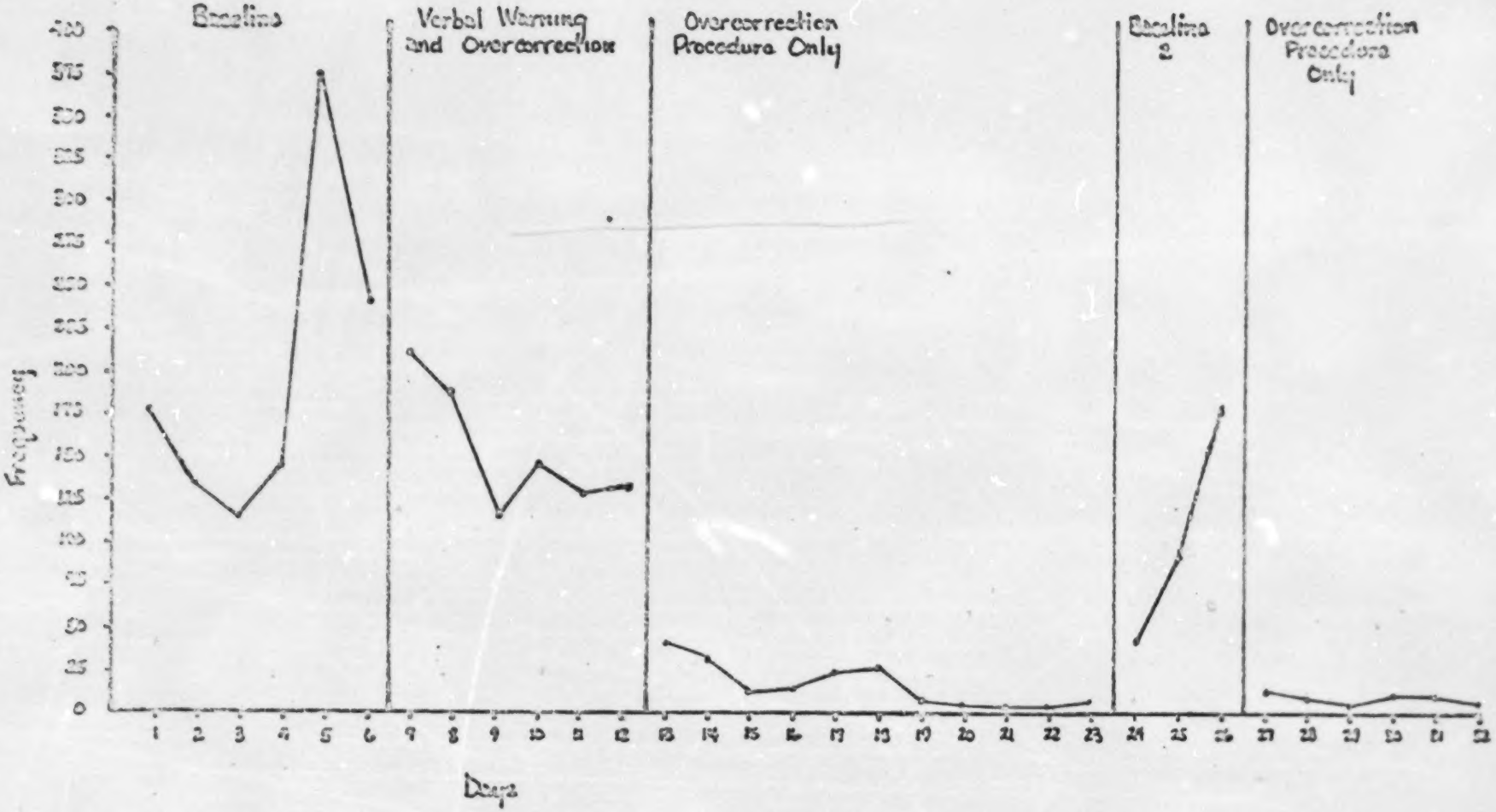
Terry	9-27-76	Social	Wharton
Student's Name	Date	Area Involved	Teacher's Name

Behavior: Overcorrection procedure for inappropriate vocalizations

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES AND MATERIALS	CONSEQUENCE	CRITERIA
To decrease the number of inappropriate vocalizations	1. The behavior to be overcorrected is defined as: Vocalizations are operationally defined as any sound which is not a word or word approximation, and which is not task related. Specific vocalizations which are considered deviant include, the perseverative "t" sound, the "hic" sound, asperations, dah, and bah.		2 weeks with 0% incidence of inappropriate vocalizations
	2. Explain the procedure to the child.		
	3. When the student emits any of the above behaviors the adult immediately (1 second or less) says, "Terry no noise" in a bland tone.	Pass-The student stops emitting the noise within 1-2 seconds. He is allowed to continue with the present activity. Fail-If the student continues to emit the sound, the next step is implemented.	
	4. If the child is not quiet immediately (within 1 to 2 seconds) the adult applies his (her) hand firmly to the students mouth and holds it there continuously for 30 seconds	Fail-Adult's hand applies to child's mouth for 30 seconds.	
	5. At the end of the 30 second period, the adult says "good being quiet" and then removes the hand from the child's mouth. If he is not quiet during that time, the hand will remain on his mouth until he is quiet. Then the adult will silently count to ten, say "good being quiet" and remove hand.	Pass-if child is quiet, he is allowed to return to the previous activity. Fail-The procedure is repeated.	
	6. The child will be reinforced verbally for quiet, on task behavior intermittently.	Pass-Verbal praise	


Baseline
Verbal Warning and Overcorrection
Overcorrection Procedure Only
Baseline 2
Overcorrection Procedure Only
Frequency
Days